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## **ILLINOIS DESCENDANTS OF EDWARD SMITH.**

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### **An English Soldier in the Revolutionary War who deserted and joined the American Army.**

By NANCY JANE LEAVERTON SALE, one of the Descendants.

Edward Smith was the son of Richard and Jane (Green) Smith. He was born about the year 1754. He had a brother John who was a sea captain and who probably was his only brother and a sister Betsey. His father may have been born in Scotland; the mother was Scotch Irish. They lived on a farm sixteen miles from London, England. Edward Smith was drafted into military service about the year 1774 and sent to America as a lieutenant in Colonel Tarleton's light horse cavalry, in the British army, serving about two years, when at the Battle of the Cowpens he became so disgusted with the treatment accorded the prisoners taken by the British that he left the British army and joined the Revolutionary forces, serving under Lafayette as a lieutenant. After the close of the war he went to Virginia and was married to Nancy Black in 1779, and for a while lived near the Natural Bridge and like most people thought a change would be better, went to Mercer county, Kentucky, and remained there till the year of 1803, then moved to a farm of several hundred acres near Corydon, Indiana, a most beautiful spot, a part of which is now owned by the Edward O'Conner, Fair Ground Association, Loweth addition. Here he and his sons cleared the grounds and burned trees (which would now be quite valuable). The land was cultivated with the crudest of implements and planted in corn, which yielded bountiful crops. In those early pioneer days the corn was shelled by hand and taken to a "grist" mill twenty miles or more either on horseback or in a cart drawn by oxen, the journey occupying two or more days. In case of the supply giving out on account of inclement weather, swollen streams or sickness, the family lived

almost exclusively on lye hominy, which is made by cooking corn in wood ashes with frequent washings and changing of water to clean the grain. He built his cabin on the green knoll near a large spring. It was constructed of logs, the cracks closed by "chinking and daubing," which is done by means of small pieces of timber (usually split out) fitted in between the logs diagonally and plastered with red clay mortar when they could get it. It had no floor, but a loft or garret, the flooring of which was made by splitting slabs off of logs and laying loosely on joists, and reached by a pole ladder. On this floor a part of the beds were made, the rest were made by putting poles through auger holes in the wall of the cabin and a fork driven in the ground held the other end with poles put across, with notches beneath to prevent slipping and then covered with hewed slats and on this a homespun and woven tick filled with straw or leaves. The cabin had a heavy batton door with wooden hinges and a latch string, an inside bar and latch with a hole through which the string was put in day time and drawn inside at night, thus locking the door. When an alarm was given at the door they were always greeted with "pull the latch string and come in." If the visitor was unfriendly or hostile this gave the inmates a chance to defend themselves. The roofs in those days were of split boards four feet long, the lower row was placed on a log with a groove in it and pinned at each end to the house with heavy pins of hard wood. The next row was held in place by another log as weight, but kept in place by perpendicular pieces split square with notches cut in end to fit both upper and lower logs, until the roof was complete. The chimneys were of either "stone" or "stick and mud." The stick and mud chimneys were erected with clay filling something as our stone or brick fireplaces are of today to about six or seven feet in height. The whole is enclosed in a log frame which is fastened to the logs of the house, the sticks are then laid in red clay mortar and plastered on inside with a heavy coat of same. This log frame is built up as a chimney is. There is a small opening left or cut in the garret and in case of fire the whole chimney is pushed away from the house by hand spikes.

At this rude cabin a welcome was sure to greet weary and tired travelers, for hospitality was a virtue

among the early pioneers. Gen. Wm. Henry Harrison was a frequent guest, as he made his journeys between his mill on Blue river and the government office at Jeffersonville, and on one of these visits occurred "The Christening Party" of the Town of Corydon, the birthplace of the state of Indiana. A summer morning, with the bright sun shining down upon a small clearing in a beautiful valley of the wilderness, a small rudely constructed log cabin, the only habitation in view, stands forth conspicuously as an evidence of the westward march of civilization. Deep silence broods upon the face of nature, broken only by the hum of insects, the song of wild birds, and the singing echo of a distant woodman's axe. Suddenly, from the interior of the cabin, peals forth the clear sound of a fresh voice uplifted in melody. It is evidently that of a young girl, and as the air, a plaintive one, is wafted on the gentle summer breeze to the surrounding hills, a spirit of human life prevades the solitudes. Grouped around the singer in the little cabin are a number of persons whose habiliments and conversation betray their intimate association with the hardships of frontier life in the early days of the Northwest Territory. All save one, a fine looking man dressed in the traveling apparel worn by gentlemen at the beginning of the nineteenth century; a man whose face denotes strong character and great intelligence, and whose bearing is that of one born to lead and command. As the echoes of the song die away, he who is evidently an honored guest of the humble backwoods family, and who has been listening attentively to the sweet voice of the young singer, addresses them: "It is my intention to found a town in this vicinity, but I have as yet decided upon no name for it. Who can suggest one?" "Oh General!" answers the singer "name it after your favorite song, "Old Corydon." "I shall do so," responds the gentleman, as he arises to take leave of his hospitable and warm-hearted entertainers, and he kept his promise. The frontier family was that of Edward Smith, a deserter from the English army during the Revolutionary War. The young girl who made the request was Jennie, his daughter, and the honored guest was General William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory. Thus was Corydon christened. There were but few houses there, even on the present site of Corydon. Governor Harrison, then ter-

ritorial governor and afterwards president, took great interest in this little settlement. When Edward Smith deserted from the British army, he dared not return to England and so forfeited a large estate, which was seized and held by the Crown of England. His daughter Isabel made efforts to reclaim this estate, which had gained in value each year, and to prove her right of inheritance before it went into "The Courts of Chancery." This vast inheritance was lost by being unable, after a lengthy correspondence with the officers of the courts of Prince Edward, when she failed to answer the question as to place of burial of some ancestor. There are numerous incidents handed down through the descendants of Edward Smith of which I will give a few. After a long horseback journey from Vincennes, Governor Harrison stopped at night as usual with the Smiths. His clothes were dirty and his socks worn both at heel and toe. He asked one of the girls to wash and mend them sufficiently for completion of his journey. She not only washed them, but cut away the worn parts, replacing them by the light of a lard lamp with newly knitted heels and toes, and had them ready to put on in the morning, and for this kindness he repaid her on his next visit by giving her a beautiful silk shawl. On the hill above and back from the natural amphitheater of the Fair Ground today, the Indians camped (Delawares we think) and also used water from the large spring. They were very friendly with the Smiths, and frequent visitors at their home. Edward Smith's name is given among the names of the first grand jury drawn in Harrison county. His name is frequently seen on the old records. His son John was a carpenter and assisted in building the state house, which was constructed from stones taken out of the beds of nearby creeks and drawn to the building site by oxen. This substantial building is still standing and is used as a county court house. Edward Smith died in 1828 and was buried in the cedar glade south of the home.

A monument with his and his wife's name, also the names of his parents and all his children, has been erected by his descendants at Mount Zion cemetery, eleven miles south of Corydon, where his wife is buried. To them were born nine children: Jennie or Jane, born 1781, married Stephen Beeman; John, born 1783, married Jane Long; James, born

1784, married Sarah Long; Mary, born 1791, married Henry Highfill; Sallie, born, date not known, married — French; Rachel, born 1798, married Samuel Black; Isabel, born 1798, married Charles Felts; Nancy, born, date not known, married — Highfill; Samuel, born, date not known, never married.

At the Centennial celebration at Corydon on June 2nd and 3rd, 1916, Edward Smith and his daughter, Jennie, and Governor William Henry Harrison and others were impersonated by people living there, depicting the ways and manners of the old pioneer days of one hundred years ago. Governor Harrison, as usual, asking Miss Jennie again to sing his favorite song, Corydon, and no doubt but what upon every centennial that Corydon has in the future she will select her sweetest singer to stand upon the hallowed spot of the Smith's cabin and sing to the accompaniment of the gurgling waters of the Old Fair Grounds Springs the plaintive strains that inspired General Harrison to give the first capital of Indiana the name of Corydon.

#### CORYDON (the song).

What sorrowful sounds do I hear,  
 Move slowly along in the gale;  
 How solemn they fall on my ear,  
 As softly they pass through the vale.  
 Sweet Corydon's notes are all o'er,  
 Now lonely he sleeps in the clay,  
 His cheeks bloom with roses no more,  
 Since death called his spirit away.

Sweet woodbines will rise round his feet,  
 And willows their sorrowing wave;  
 Young hyacinths freshen and bloom  
 While hawthorns encircle his grave.  
 Each morn when the sun gilds the east,  
 (The green grass bespangled with dew.)  
 He'll cast his bright beams on the west,  
 To charm the sad Caroline's view.

O Corydon! hear the sad cries  
 Of Caroline, plaintive and slow;  
 O spirit! look down from the skies,  
 And pity thy mourner below.  
 'Tis Caroline's voice in the grove,  
 Which Philomel hears on the plain,  
 Then striving the mourner to soothe,  
 With sympathy joins in her strain.

Ye shepherds so blithesome and young,  
 Retire from your sports on the green,  
 Since Corydon's deaf to my song,  
 The wolves tear the lambs on the plain.  
 Each swain round the forest will stray,  
 And sorrowing hang down his head,  
 His pipe then in sympathy play  
 Some dirge to sweet Corydon's shade.

And when the still night has unfurl'd  
 Her robes o'er the hamlet around,  
 Gray twilight retires from the world,  
 And darkness encumbers the ground,  
 I'll leave my own gloomy abode,  
 To Corydon's urn will I fly,  
 There kneeling will bless the just God  
 Who dwells in bright mansions on high.

Since Corydon hears me no more,  
 In gloom let the woodlands appear,  
 Ye oceans be still of your roar,  
 Let Autumn extend around the year;  
 I'll hie me through meadow and lawn,  
 There cull the bright flow'rets of May,  
 Then rise on the wings of the morn,  
 And waft my young spirit away.

John Smith (my grandfather), second child of Edward and Nancy Black Smith, was born October 29, 1783, in the State of Virginia; died November 11, 1849, in Bond county, Illinois. When a young boy he was taken by his parents to

Mercer county, Kentucky, and in 1803 he, with his parents, brothers and sisters, moved to near Corydon, Indiana, where he lived till he was grown and married. He was a carpenter by trade and was one of a number that helped build the old court house at Corydon, which is still standing. In 1816 he was married to Jane Long, born May 17, 1791, in Fauquier county, Virginia; died November 1, 1871, in Bond county, Illinois. She was the daughter of James and Priscilla Lasswell Long. All four are buried in Smith Grove cemetery, four miles southwest of Greenville, Illinois. In 1818 he and his wife came to Illinois, and bought eighty acres of land four miles southwest of Greenville, in what is now known as the Smith settlement. Here he built a two-story brick house, the stairway running to the second floor was built on the outside. It was here all his children were born, and from this wild prairie land he developed a good farm. In a few years he bought forty acres more and built a large three-story frame house, adjoining the old brick one. This was taken down after the new one was completed. The lumber used in the building of this frame house was most all black walnut and ash, the trees being felled and hauled from the nearby timber. It had a wide hall running through the center of both first and second floors. This old house is still standing and in very good condition. He also planted an apple orchard of forty acres, going to the State of Virginia on horseback and bringing the small trees back, tied behind him on the saddle, and in a very few years had, at that time, one of the largest apple orchards in the State. He built a large cider press and mill, where the apples were ground and pressed into cider. This was done in the fall for a great many years, and even after my father had bought the farm and orchard. I can remember when a very small child of seeing from forty to fifty or more barrels of cider setting around the old mill, and of fighting the yellow jackets from the great tubs of cider with my sunbonnet to get a cupful to drink; and have seen many loads of apples and cider hauled to St. Louis, Highland and other places. People came from near and far to get their winter apples. This orchard contained many varieties of apples, and some of the trees lived to be very old. The last one was blown down in 1912. It was

the last of its race—this grand old storm-tossed, weather-beaten apple tree.

John Smith and his brother, James, gave the grounds for a cemetery and for the building of the first Baptist church in that community. He was one of the elders in the church, and kept the church book for a number of years. This book is now in care of the Historical Library at Springfield, Illinois. He was widely known throughout that part of Illinois, and few men had more friends than Uncle John Smith of Bond county. His wife was a lovely character, one of those gentle and sweet-natured women who always met you with a smile and kind word. Although not a church member, she did her part in all Christian duties, and the Bible was her book of all books, having read it through a great many times. In her young life she was a great knitter, and kept it up through life. She could knit a pair of socks in a day, but her hobby was mittens. She could knit them in various patterns, such as beehive, squares, dots, stripes running round and lengthways, carrying from three to four colors of yarn at a time in one mitten with several rounds of long loops at the wrist; and it was her delight to have ready on every Christmas morning a pair of mittens for every member of the household. She outlived her husband twenty-three years and passed away loved by all the community. To them were born nine children. They are as follows: Nancy Smith, married October 20, 1831, to Thomas Morgan, by William Hunter, M. G.; Sally Smith, married August 4, 1832, to John W. West, by Andrew G. Mills, J. P.; James L. Smith, married April 27, 1842, to Mariett Dewey, by J. R. Ford, M. G.; Edward Smith, married, date not known, to Eliza Morrell; Priscilla Smith, died young; John M. Smith, married January 15, 1852, to Margaret Sophia Smith, by Socrates Smith, M. G.; Mary E. Smith (my mother), married December 27, 1847, to John A. Leaverton, by James B. Woollard, M. G.; Lucinda A. Smith, married September 27, 1855, to Chapman Atkinson, by Thomas W. Hynes, M. G.; Amanda I. Smith, married January 3, 1866, to John D. W. Gillispie.

**MARY E. SMITH LEAVERTON.**

**Granddaughter of Edward Smith, a Pioneer of Bond County,  
Illinois.**

By Her Daughter, NANCY JANE LEAVERTON SALE.

Mary E. Smith, the seventh child of John and Jane (Long) Smith, was born on Christmas day, December 25, 1826, four miles southwest of Greenville, Bond county, Illinois, and grew to womanhood on the old home farm. Her first school days were spent in a little log schoolhouse just over the hill and about a quarter of a mile from her home. At the age of fifteen she was sent to a select school near Greenville. There were twelve girls that attended and all lived to be married and were near and dear friends all through life. In her young days she was very fond of making patchwork quilts and kept it up all through her life, piecing hundreds of them, in a great variety of patterns. One I remember especially. It had over 19,000 pieces in it and there is still in the family a quilt made of her wedding dresses. She was also very fond of flowers, and her yard and garden was filled with their beauty. Roses were her favorites, she took great pride in them and often took premiums at fairs. After her school days were over she visited her oldest sister, who lived near Winchester, Illinois, staying with her for some time. She visited Springfield, Illinois, when it was a small village and was so pleased with it and the rich prairie country surrounding it she hoped some time it would be her home, and in 1871 she with her husband, John A. Leaverton and family, located on a beautiful farm containing 845 acres ten miles west of Springfield on the Jacksonville road. After the death of her husband she took charge of the home and carried on the farm with the assistance of her sons, and made many improvements upon the place, making it one of the most desirable farms in the country. Her business qualities were such that whatever she undertook to do



MARY E. SMITH LEAVERTON, WIFE OF  
JOHN A. LEAVERTON.

proved successful. She was a member of the Baptist church and ready to do her part in sustaining it. She lived to be eighty-five and passed away Feb. 29, 1912, and is buried by the side of her husband in Berlin cemetery, Berlin, Illinois. To them were born ten children. All lived to be grown but two. Their names are: John Franklin, married Jan. 15, 1878, by Rev. W. C. Harvey to Emma Drusilla Martin; Nancy Jane, married Nov. 9, 1876, by Rev. John VanPatten to Anthony W. Sale; Mary Ellen, married May 1, 1873, by Rev. James Kenedy to William H. Holly; Margaret Isabelle, married Jan. 1, 1880, by Rev. ——— Clark to Arthur E. Washburne; George Wilson, married June 18, 1885, by Rev. D. S. Johnson to Grace Heaton Conkling; Charles Alexander, married Jan. 14, 1886, by Rev. Richard Gear Hobbs to Laura Olive Tobin; Emma Jeannette, married Oct. 23, 1889, by Rev. O. O. Fletcher to Edwin J. Smith.